

Listing of the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1-3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) A wire steered scalpel for enlarging catheter entry sites wherein a guide wire has been inserted preparatory to introducing a catheter, said scalpel comprising:

a housing comprising a pathway having an entry portal and an exit portal through which the guide wire is threadably disposed to facilitate steering the housing to the entry site, and the entry portal being proximal to the entry site when the scalpel is used;

a split scalpel blade having a pair of sharpened points, said blade being within the housing and aligned with the pathway to lance, at the entry site, to be extended from the housing and thereby produce an incision having a predetermined width and depth; and

an actuator comprising a plurality of blade interfacing parts by which the scalpel blade is manually displaced relative to the housing and pathway to cause the blade to lance.

5. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 4 wherein the scalpel blade is medially split to comprise two scalpel components aligned to provide a distally disposed piercing end and a proximally disposed end whereat the two components comprise a common hinge connection.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 4 wherein the housing comprises at least one stop for limiting travel of the scalpel blade components, thereby limiting depth of the lance and ending a first lancing motion of the scalpel.

8-10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 4 wherein said housing comprises a top part and a bottom part.

12. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 11 wherein said top and bottom parts are molded as a single unit wherein said parts comprise a common living hinge which permits the parts to close together as a clam shell.

13. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 12 wherein said scalpel blade comprises a medially depressed channel into which a guide wire is displaced preparatory to closing the top and bottom parts together.

14. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 12 wherein said actuator parts comprise latches which act against the scalpel blade to secure the blade to a part of the housing while the housing is open.

15. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 4 wherein said housing comprises an adjustable distally disposed nose part comprising a distal face which is adjustable along a longitudinal medial line to selectably limit scalpel blade displacement distally beyond the distal face and thereby limit depth of penetration of the blade.

16. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 4 wherein said housing comprises an enclosed pathway for a guide wire threaded there through, said pathway having a distal opening and a proximal opening whereby the scalpel is displaced along the guide wire to an incision site.

17. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 16 wherein said housing comprises a pathway offset to provide a point of coincidence between the guide wire and the sharpened point of a fully extended scalpel blade.

18. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 4 wherein said actuator comprises a plurality of hingeably interconnected parts, including a manual interface component, which cooperate to provide a mechanical advantage whereby linear displacement of the scalpel blade is greater than manual displacement of the interface component.

19. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 18 wherein said actuator parts are molded as a single part comprising living hinges therewith molded.

20. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 18 wherein said actuator comprises a living hinge connection produced by integrally molding at least one housing part with the actuator.

21. (Original) A wire steered scalpel according to Claim 18 further comprising a spring affixed on a first end to the housing and to actuator on a second whereby the blade is automatically returned into the housing after use as a safety feature.

22-37. (Canceled)